

Dear Members of the Human Services Committee of Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is Bryan Chong, and I am a resident of New Britain. I am currently under a federal Deferred Enforcement of Departure status as someone from Hong Kong, similar to but separate from Temporary Protected Status.

I stand in support of HB 6616: An Act Concerning Expansion Of Husky Health Benefits To Those Ineligible Due To Immigration Status. Expanding access to HUSKY regardless of immigration status is an important step in ensuring our immigrant community has access to the healthcare we need. But our work doesn't end with expanding access up to age 26; we need to open access to HUSKY and healthcare to all immigrants of any age. If Connecticut wants a future that includes healthy families and a stable, thriving and growing workforce that is ready to meet the needs of our future, Connecticut must ensure that these individuals have access to health coverage.

I was born and raised in Hong Kong, and came to Connecticut nearly 9 years ago as an international student – I graduated from Kent School and Wesleyan University. Over the last decade, I have found and made a home here with wonderful people who have taught me the value of solidarity, and it is with that spirit that I have forged my path in Connecticut, finding work as an organizer for various nonprofits and campaigns, supporting people all over this state who are striving to improve the lives of working families and communities of color, as my way of expressing gratitude to a state and people that has shown me the utmost hospitality and welcome.

Since I've lost my college health insurance two years ago, I have been a gig worker and thus do not have access to employer provided insurance. I have needed to be very careful to not fall sick or get injured, which has put a lot of stress on my work, as I have to travel a lot and have in-person conversations with different people all across Connecticut. When I have been sick, I have needed to self manage and self medicate with over the counter medications. I have not seen a doctor in years now, and I hope my luck does not run out before I find a job that can offer me robust insurance.

With health insurance, I would be able to do my advocacy and organizing work more effectively and not worry that any happenstance incident will put me in thousands of dollars of debt. Especially as someone who was involved with the movement for democracy in Hong Kong, where public healthcare is robust and guaranteed as a basic human right despite the lack of political democracy, I know that we in Connecticut can do better. I know that with this bill, Connecticut can become more caring, more vibrant, and cement itself as a national leader in creating a just society.

I support HB 6616 and I ask the committee to support and pass this legislation. Looking forward, I ask the committee to work towards opening access to all immigrants regardless of age.

Thank you for your time,  
*Bryan Chong*  
*New Britain*